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## AN ARTIST'S HOUSE.

BY THEODORE CHILD.

IN previous articles on French house furnishing I have frequently had occasion to refer to the house of the eminent novelist, historian and collector, M. Edmond de Goncourt, in the Boulevard de Montmorency, at Auteuil, one of the western suburbs of Paris. This house, and more particularly the treasures it contains, M. de Goncourt has himself described in two charming volumes entitled *La Maison d'un Artiste*. It is indeed the house of an artist, of a man of impeccable taste, whose eye is sensitive to the most delicate refinements of color and of line; it is furthermore one of the richest treasure houses existing in Paris of things of the XVIIIth century, that essentially French century, when France was more French than it has ever been before or since.

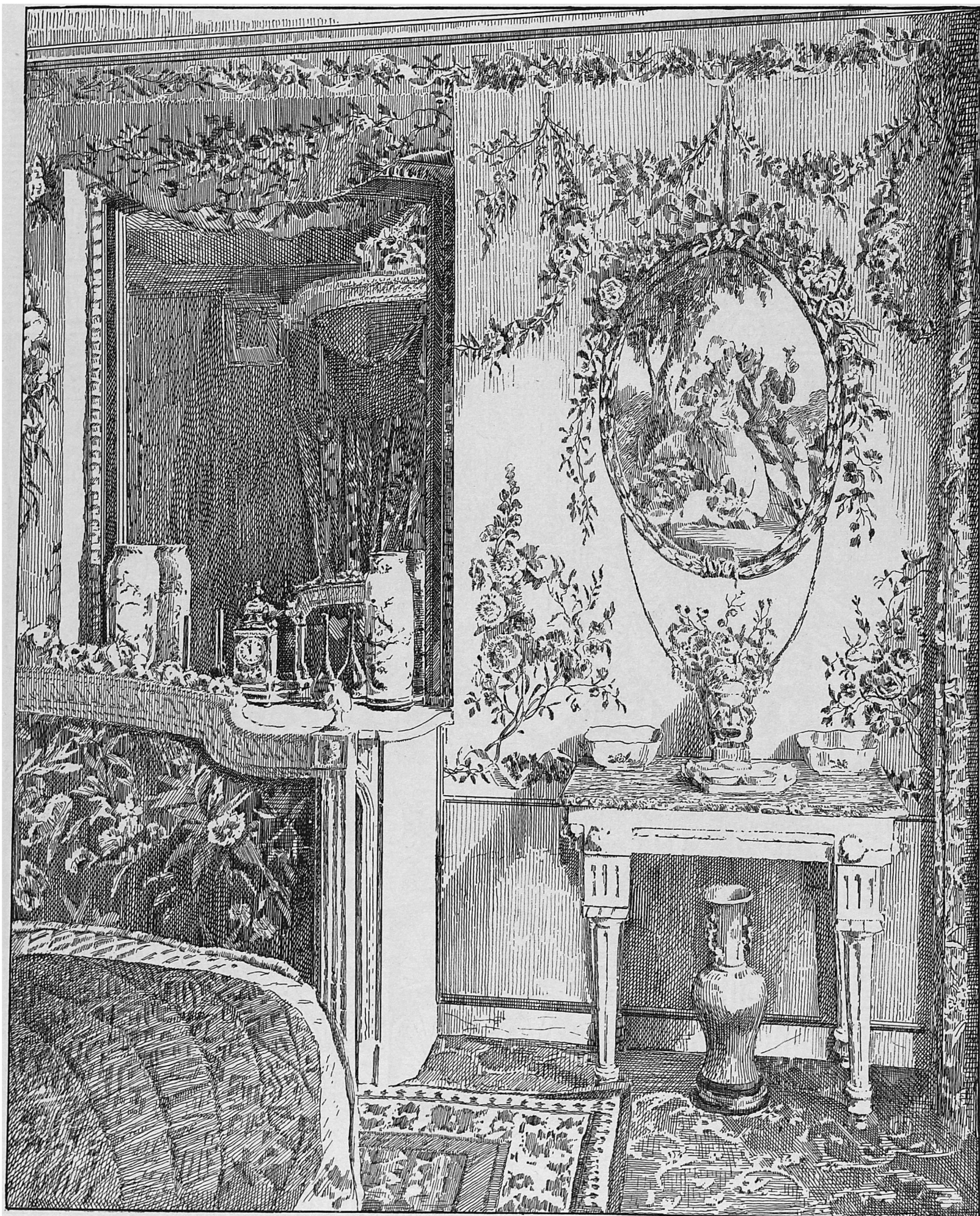
The house is a modest two-story villa, with

attics, an ordinary *bourgeois* house, with no architectural pretensions whatever either inside or out, and there is only one room, the drawing-room, that is of decent size. The other rooms are all small, at least small according to our Anglo-Saxon notions. Passing through the front door into the vestibule and hall, the visitor is greeted by terracottas, bronzes, drawings, XVIIIth century porcelain, and a few objects of Oriental art. The hall is paved gaily with white and red Languedoc marble, and the walls and ceiling are covered with a modern embossed leather, adorned with fantastic parrots gilt and painted on a water-green ground. On this leather, in a *désordre cherché*, are hung all sorts of bright and attractive things, potteries, Japanese embroidery, odd and exotic things, that astonish by their originality.

A door of the hall opens directly into the dining-room, a snug little box, where walls and ceiling are entirely hidden beneath tapestry. By a rare chance M. de Goncourt has found a series of panels of tapestry, that formerly decorated a

music pavilion in a garden, a series which just covers the four walls and the filled-in angles of the dining-room. These tapestries, executed from the designs of Leprince and Huet, cover the walls with a fancy landscape, where the theatrical rusticity of Boucher is mingled with architectural prospects—a landscape peopled by adorably false humanity: beribboned shepherdesses, women spinning, huntswomen in red coats, such as we see in the paintings of Vanloo, and little faun-like peasants riding on goats. The background of these tapestries is the creamy white that forms the tender atmosphere of all the pretty tapestries of the XVIIIth century; and each subject is surrounded by arabesques and cascades of flowers on a moss-green ground.

These walls of woven painting naturally suffer no decoration. The only ornament is a pair of gilt bronze appliques, with their rocaille foliage and rich and vigorous freedom of line, splendid specimens of the metal work of end of the XVIIIth century. On the chimney are two rocaille three-



BEDROOM, HOUSE OF ED. DE GONCOURT.

Drawn expressly for this Journal by E. ROUYEYRE, Paris.



branch candlesticks, and between them a marble statuette of Falconet.

The furniture of the dining-room is extremely simple: a table and eight chairs; a dumb-waiter in rosewood; a large Japanese screen, curiously carved, and, in front of the fireplace, a screen formed of a Japanese *foukousa*, framed and glazed in a simple bamboo stand. The accompanying drawing shows a corner of the dining-room, with the tapestries, the appliques, and the fireplace, with its brilliant Japanese screen.

Opening out of the dining-room is the small *salon*, and next to that the larger *salon*, where M. de Goncourt has hung the most precious drawings of his collection. These drawings are all mounted on blue bristol board, and framed with simple gold. After long meditation M. de Goncourt has arrived at the conviction that the best ground to set off drawings is dull red and shiny black, and so he has had all the wood-work, the doors, the cornices, and the washboards, painted black and polished by the same process as is employed in carriage painting, and which gives a surface as

smooth as lacquer and as brilliant as ebony. The walls and the ceiling of the small *salon* are covered with red Andrinople; silk and velvet being too dear, woolen stuff being a prey of vermin and of unstable color, the best red hangings are cotton stuff, which retain their intense geranium shade. M. de Goncourt says in his *Maison d'un Artiste*: "In principle we may say that the only truly harmonious apartments are those where the furniture stands out from the contrast and opposition of two broadly dominating tonalities, and red and black is after all the happiest combination that has yet been found to set off and throw into relief the articles that furnish a room."

In the large *salon* the walls are also hung with red Andrinople, and covered with some of the gems of the incomparable Goncourt collection of drawings. On the ceiling is a large piece of tapestry, "Venus at Vulcan's forge." The furniture consists of a splendid Beauvais tapestry suite of ten arm chairs and a sofa; a secretary and commode of Marie Antoinette marqueterie; in the corner, on two Boule pedestals, two long Sèvres

*pâte tendre* biscuit vases; in the middle of the *salon* an immense *cire perdue* Japanese bronze basin; on the chimney-piece a statuette and two terra-cotta vases of Clodion. The marvel of marvels of this *salon* is the Beauvais tapestry suite, representing La Fontaine's fables, from Oudry's designs. The back of one chair represents "The Cock and the Pearl," of another "The Fox and the Stork," another "The Cat and the Monkey," and so on; and the chairs are ample and spacious, made to receive the large *paniers* of the XVIIIth century. On the back of the sofa a peacock spreads his blue-spotted tail superb against a creamy background, and the whole sofa is bordered with a splendid garland of poppies, tulips, narcissus, peaches, muscatel grapes, ripe pomegranates, flowers and fruits of the sunny south.

The staircase and the balustrade is hung with a maize colored cotton stuff, with a polychrome imitation Persian border. At the bottom, where the hand-rail starts, there stands a bronze crane, and the walls of the staircase are hung with drawings, plates, *foukousas*, *kakemonos*, engravings,



CORNER OF DINING ROOM, HOUSE OF ED. DE GONCOURT.

Drawn expressly for this Journal by E. ROUVREYRE, Paris.



etc. The landing at the top of the stairway is hung with a yellowish unbleached cotton stuff, and on brackets on the walls are specimens of fine Japanese pottery, interspersed with decorative panels hung up like pictures, those decorative panels, in the composition of which the Japanese are so clever, and where, on the basis of strangely veined wood, they arrange with delicate fancifulness, flowers in faience, leaves in colored ivory, rocks in jade, birds in mother of pearl, suns in coral, an assemblage of materials which in European hands would be horrible.

On this first floor is the study, the Eastern cabinet, the bedroom and the dressing-room of the bachelor collector. The Eastern cabinet is purely a museum full of the choicest specimens of lacquers, porcelain, carved Oriental ivory, and Japanese metal work. The study is full of books, and it is only in the bedroom and dressing-room that we shall have to look for hints. The walls of the dressing-room are covered with matting, paneled into compartments with bamboo. The doors, the window frame, and the frame of the looking-glass are lacquered red. Over the doors are *académies* by Boucher, and on each door is hung a *kukemono* floating loosely with the movements of the door or of the breeze. On the ceiling is an enlargement of a page of birds and flowers from a Japanese album, and on the walls bright gouaches of the XVIIIth century, and aquarelles by Gavarni intermingled with Sèvres, Saxe, Chinese and Japanese plates, and with, here and there, a vase or potiche on a gilt bracket. At the back a white marble wash-stand, with a service in German crystal. The whole forms a most gay and amusing dressing-room.

The bedroom contains an immense bed, marvelously carved, with a canopy of roses, and, at head and foot an avalanche of lilac, convolvulus and daisies, tied into garlands with ribbons; a monumental bed of perfect proportions and exquisite richness of ornament, painted simply white, and relieved only by the gilded knobs of the bolts. This bed, which will be seen in the accompanying drawing, partly in the left hand foreground and partly reflected in the mirror, came from the château of Rambouillet, and is stated to have been the bed in which Mme. de Lamballe slept when she went to visit her father-in-law. The bed is stuffed and upholstered head and foot with a broché silk.

The rest of the furniture of the bedroom is composed of two arm chairs, a Louis XVI. console of curious form, shown in the sketch; a *commode-tombeau*, covered with curiously-wrought brass fittings; a clock and two flambeaux on the chimney piece, and a few pieces of bright porcelain of the XVIIIth century. But the marvel of this room, after the bed, is the series of tapestries on the walls, medallions with figures, surrounded by garlands and festoons of flowers, on a delicious white ground.

Such is a brief and summary enumeration of the details of furniture and decoration in M. Edmond de Goncourt's little villa. In the accompanying sketches the reader will catch a glimpse of two delicious corners in the house, but no sketch and no words can give an idea of the perfect harmony that reigns in the arrangement of every room, the charm of color, the grace of line, the impression of repose and caressing elegance that the eye receives in every direction. The whole house is full of the grace, the elegance, and the charm of that XVIIIth century, which M. de Goncourt loves so dearly, and which his writings have brought into such high honor and esteem.

### SCREENS.

BY ELIZABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL.

A PRETTY screen is an invaluable addition to a pretty room, and will go far toward redeeming an ugly one from hopeless dowdiness. It can be used to make a cozy corner by the fireplace, or to shut off the draught from door or window, or to relieve the monotony of a blank wall and make a charming nook instead of a dreary waste of open space where the sensation of comfort would be impossible.

There is room for every variety of individual taste in making and adorning a screen. It may be expensive or inexpensive, brilliant and striking or dark and rich in effect. It may be resplendent with satin and embroidery or modestly attired in chintz. It may be made sufficiently gorgeous to

ornament a drawing-room, or when it is required for serious service, as to screen a washstand in a nursery or bedroom, it can be of simple materials and aim merely at being bright and tasteful.

The frame is the first consideration; it can be of one, two, three, or four leaves, folding or stationary, according to the purpose for which the screen is required. A pretty one for a drawing-room where there is an open fire is a sheet of

powers of any amateur who is clever at the use of tools. Pine painted black is the lightest and most serviceable, and, if there is no home talent available, can be made by a carpenter at a trifling expense. It can be ornamented with gilt lines or a Grecian pattern in gold, but as a rule the plain black makes the better outline. It should have small handles to hold it by in moving; where this is neglected careless fingers are apt to poke through the covering, or, if they refrain from absolute destruction, to soil and deface it. Casters are necessary to avoid lifting it if it has to be moved often.

For a summer parlor where the floor is covered with matting, or for a room finished with a dado of matting, a screen covered with the same material is very pretty. A narrow width, with the crossbar as little pronounced as possible, should be chosen, and a suitable design worked on it in Germantown yarn or coarse worsted. Cat tails and water grasses are appropriate, or even the much-fatigued stork; but lilies and sunflowers had better be avoided. The ends of the matting can be turned in and fastened with brass-headed nails.

Java canvas, momie or oatmeal cloth, Turkish toweling, satin sheeting, fine ladies' cloth, or any material on which it is possible to embroider, make a good background, and with a group of flowers or figures done on it in outline or Kensington stitch is very effective. A bold pen and ink etching on fine unbleached cotton for the centre, with a conventional design for the corners of each leaf, is remarkably striking for the amount of work involved, which is a mere nothing to those who can draw easily.

People who lack the artistic talent, and to whom "a primrose by the river's brim" is simply "a yellow primrose," not transferable for purposes of decoration, need not despair. If they cannot create they can adapt, and sometimes the result of their labors is better than that of their more gifted sisters. A quaint effect can be produced by fastening Chinese crape pictures on a foundation of Turkey red cotton, leaving a space between making a red frame for each. The delicately beautiful cards that can be picked out from the profusion of those that deluge us not only at Christmas and the New Year, but at Easter, on Valentine's Day, and on birthdays, may be arranged to make a lovely screen. It should be covered first with stout paper or cotton, tightly stretched, and then the cards gummed neatly in their places.

Nothing can be prettier for a bedroom than a chintz-covered screen, particularly when the curtains, chair and ottoman covers match it. The chintz should be cut half as wide again as the frame, to allow of its being fulled or fluted, hemmed at the top and bottom, and a drawing string run through it, which can be tacked in place and easily removed when it is necessary to send the chintz to the laundry. Spotted muslin can be used instead in the same way, with a permanent foundation of pink, blue, or crimson glazed cotton to harmonize with the color of the room. By the exercise of a little ingenuity and a small amount of trouble a screen can be made at home at half the cost for which it could be purchased, and will give equal satisfaction.—*Christian Union*.

### PAINTING ON CRAPED GOLD PAPER.

DECIDEDLY attractive paintings may be executed on this material, presenting much the appearance of having been done on canvas. Water illuminating colors are employed. The design is worked out on tracing and carbonized paper. Chinese white, mixed with water size, is laid evenly on the outlines with a sable brush. As lights and shadows are marked out, the intermediate parts are to be softened by dabbing them over with a light brush. If there is to be a hard outline surrounding the objects, they are to be carefully circled with a fine line of sepia, or the painting may end in distinct edges as in ordinary illuminating. The former method suits medieval renderings.

An improved window and door lock has been patented. It is simple in construction and no spring is needed, but by it the sashes may be locked when fully closed, or the lower sash supported at any point desired.

WALL paper in imitation of tapestry is made.



AN EXAMPLE OF ENGLISH WALL PAPER.

From *The Furniture Gazette*, London.

plate glass in a setting of wood to match the furniture or wood work of the room. It protects from the heat without hiding the cheery blaze. This frame must be made by an experienced workman, but one for a covered screen is quite within the